

Tabernacle & Social Hall

On July 15, 1867, Almon Harris, first president of Wasatch Stake, decreed the need of a stake tabernacle. He supervised the construction of the red sandstone structure which cost \$30,000, paid entirely by donation. Elisha Averett was supervisor of masonry, Alex Fortie, carpenters, and Francis Kirby, painting. The rock was quarried by hand from the mountains approximately three miles east of Heber in the Lake Creek area. Shingles on the tower were cut from sheet metal.

The east gallery entrance housed a stairway leading to the tower containing a large bell. Old timers recall the bell rang every Sunday morning at 9:30 reminding the population of 10 a.m. Sunday School. Likewise it was sounded at 1:30 p.m., announcing the two o'clock Sacrament meeting.

It was also used for curfew in the evening, for fire alarm, and any gathering of townspeople. Slowly and sadly the bell tolled as a funeral cortege approached the Tabernacle. Officials said the bell is still in the tower and will be placed in the tower of the new building.

There were four "pot bellied stoves," one in each corner. The seating arrangements in winter were prescribed as follows: Men seated on the south, women on the north, ladies with babies allowed to sit around the stoves.

In preparation for the dedication, the wooden floors were scrubbed and bleached with

homemade soap. Homemade carpets were laid down the aisles. Coal oil lamps hung from the ceiling. Silver urns, approximately 18 inches tall, were used for the sacrament. Young men, one at each end of the hard benches, carefully watched to be sure the large cup was refilled as it passed to each person, row after row.

Pokes Ashes

"Uncle Jessie" Bond, janitor for 30 years, kept busy hustling from stove to stove, poking dying ashes and refueling. The Wasatch Wave of May 4, 1889, reports: "The Stake House is finished and cleaned in beautiful style ready for dedication tomorrow. Conference visitors are expected to clean their feet before entering the building and leave their knives, pencils and tobacco at home." Dedication of the building was by Francis L. Lyman, then one of the Council of the Twelve.

The building was surrounded by large cottonwood trees. They

The city of Heber was named for an early Church notable, Heber C. Kimball. A group met in Provo Valley in April 1859 to organize a new settlement on the Provo River. William Meeks was "in charge of affairs and regulations." Immediately a company was formed and a start was made. Meeks resigned in the fall of 1860, and William M. Wall was called as Presiding Elder.

In 1861 Brigham Young ordained Joseph S. Murdock bishop of the ward and instructed him to take charge of the Heber wards. President Murdock was popular with almost everyone,

including the red men who roamed, hunting and fishing in the area. "Perhaps it was because he reared an Indian girl, and later married her," residents claim.

Owned By Wards

The Social Hall was built in 1910 and is owned entirely by the six Heber wards. Though old and difficult to maintain, it is popular with young and old as a dance hall, since the floor rests on dozens of large coil springs, "as big around as a man's body." However, it is reported, "the floor is so old, it will not take another sanding . . . It is worn out."

Last April, as Wasatch High School juniors were decorating the hall for their annual prom, Ferrin Van Wagoner, superintendent, Wasatch School District, said, "This is the last season school dances will be held in Social Hall. The beautiful new high school will be completed, and will have facilities for school dances. Through the years, there has been a free exchange of buildings between the Church and school. The Church used the school gymnasium for the M-Men basketball program . . . the school used Social Hall for dances."

Maintain Offer

The Tabernacle and Social Hall, situated on approximately three acres of property on Main Street, are in the central section of town. Land value was estimated by a local professional man at \$100,000. Officials maintained an offer of \$20,000 purchase price was made by one individual claiming he would turn the building into a museum. However, he refused to sign a restrictive covenant stating the property would not be used for other purposes.

Harold J. Call, Heber attorney, has presided as Wasatch Stake President since November 1953. His counselors are Ralph Carlile and Wayne Whiting. Wasatch Stake presently consists of six Heber wards, two Midway wards, and Charleston, Wallsbury, Daniel, and Center. When 2nd and 5th wards share the new stake center, all 12 wards will be meeting in new buildings.

Tabernacle

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